

Boston, April 26. 1863.

Dear friend Mary Estlin,

I did not need the sight of your handwriting on the envelope of Miss Cobble's little pamphlet recently, to remind me of you, or to add to a long-cherished purpose of writing you once again. I can hardly explain why it is that I feel more difficulty in writing to you than to any other English correspondent; but it is a fact that, while I desire & would be glad to write to you frequently, I seem to shrink from it as from something for which I am not quite prepared. Certainly the fault, - if fault there is any where, - is not in you; and I am, naturally, unwilling to think there is fault in me about it. I am disposed to lay it, therefore, on circumstances, and on these times so sadly "out of joint". It is no forgetfulness of you, your home, and the long correspondence I had with its two inmates, which has led to these long intervals of silence in my letters. I hope you have never thought that of me. That is impossible. I never can express in words my estimation of that privilege, whether as regards myself personally or that Cause in whose service you and he were so thoroughly one, and so true, ^{alike} so wise, so full of sympathy, so ready for the greatest principles and the minutest details. I know not that I can select one single circumstance of my life (beyond my most intimate family ties - for ^{and hardly excepting them})

which I feel that I have such reason to be grateful, as the knowledge of your father, and his friendship. It is the one feature of my visit to Europe, twenty years ago this year, which towers up in my thoughts above all others. And I believe that, privileged as I have been to know more or less intimately many excellent men, I have never known one who lifted so high my idea of what man may be and do. It is no forgetfulness, no weakening of the cords and associations which bind me to the memory of your home, which can explain my ceasing to write. No doubt I have felt that I had no right, in your impaired health, to tax your time, as before, either in receiving my letters or in replying to them. No doubt that my own poor health, for three years and upwards, has often prevented my writing to you, and then abroad, when otherwise I should have done so.

But neither of these fully account for the feeling I spoke of. — I find it chiefly explained in the altered circumstances of my own country, and in the altered relations between it and yours. I have not been willing to say to you all I felt respecting the attitude and course of England towards us, nor could I bear to run the risk of drawing from your lips and pen the censures, which came so frequently from other English antislavery pens, not only upon our Government but upon the course of the American abolitionists ^{themselves}. Not that

I write, either for ourselves or for our country, to escape, or rather lose, any friendly criticism; not that I could not bear even censure from most quarters; but I knew that from you it would be too hard. I acknowledge I was conscious that, to persons so distant from the scene as all of you are, many things that the abolitionists did might seem hard to be explained or justified; many ^{things} ~~others~~ would seem to condemn us as a people, which in reality did not express the purpose of any considerable portion of our people, but only of a comparatively small number - yet those, it is true, who had been among the leaders of the people, and who aspired to be so still. I could not prove this to be so - my assurance of my own belief would amount to but little; for though you would give me credit for honest belief (that I knew), and would allow it all weight which a mere opinion could be entitled to, yet this was no argument, much less demonstration, in favour of our position, actual or prospective. - I must perforce wait for events and time to justify us. I knew that the Thirty Years' Education which this people had had, at the hands of Abolitionists on both sides the Atlantic, could not have been thrown away. I felt a very strong conviction that the great masses of our people had no liking for Slavery, and that they would not suffer this opportunity of uprooting it to go by unimproved. Amidst frequent & most ^{nevertheless} painful discouragements, every month has given me

increased confidence in the heart of the people, &
greater faith in the issue of our great War. —
Meantime, as I said, I could not willingly say to you
what I was feeling about England (and if I wrote at
all, I must be frank. I could not dissemble), nor
could I bear well even the thought of your blame.
But I must ask your pardon for much of what
have been writing. It may seem to you very childish.
It has not been the less real & weighty with me.
My correspondence with your home has a character
of almost sacredness in my eyes. No. I could
not willingly suffer the shadow of any other feeling
to come across it. Perhaps I have deprived
myself and our Cause of much sympathy. But
on the other hand I have not wounded you with any
expression of opinion or feeling about England, which
I might have written to you. It has been a very
great trial to me, to have to change so much my
opinion of England as a nation, or of any considerable
portion of her people; there were those there, of whom
my opinion could never change; there was the memory
of those which could never cease to be dear and
hallowed to me. The past was secure from all change;
and do not imagine, kind and faithful friend, that I ever
suspected you had changed, or would. Still I felt sure
you were suffering some discouragement on our account,
perhaps losing faith (and numbers with us were in such
frame of mind) — our future was, I thought, almost wholly
dark to you; and I could but wait until the light came.

So time passed on - until two long years of this great and
 wasting War have gone. Some in England, whose good opinion we
 valued, blamed our Govt. & country for going to War with the Seceding
 States, & blamed the Abolitionists for not denouncing the War. It was
 a most unphilosophical view, without basis in human nature or
 common sense - (I am not dogmatizing, but uttering my own views and
 convictions simply, - but they have been growing deeper for two years, and
 have been strengthened & rooted by every new aspect & turn of the Rebellion.)
 We could not have avoided the War - it was the inevitable result to
 this Nation, of its long complicity with Slaveholders, its long & constant
 concessions to them. Every thing the North could do to avoid the war, (and a
 great deal which it never should have done, & which it eternally
 disgraced itself by doing,) was done, has been done for years, - and
 wholly in vain. Because it would not take the farther step, the last step,
 of total & unconditional submission to Slaveholding rule, the Southern
 leaders ^{struck} ~~strike~~ the blow, which necessitated War. That is the whole
 state of the case as to the existence of ^{the} War. It could have been for a
 very brief time averted, but only by an entire concession of all their
 demands, with full scope to build up a Slaveholding Empire in the
 heart of America, - followed by the certainty that, in the weakened &
 disheartened state of the remaining portion of our country, a Party would
 immediately have sprung up, with purpose to carry us all back
 as subject provinces of this abhorred Empire. And as we have only
 (to all human appearance) narrowly escaped this doom now, when fully
 armed to resist the Slave-power, - what hope would have been left us,
 if the nation had decided to submit to the Secession. No. The only
 alternative was this. To resist, or to submit. The latter was too
 base, too wicked, too cowardly, too degrading. It was impossible to be
 chosen, where any manhood was left. So we chose as we
 must, - and entered upon the long way of retribution, discipline,
 national judgments, sufferings, losses, sacrifices, humiliations, in
 which the people have learned, or are learning, that God is above
 man, His laws more certain than ours, and that they who have
 sown the wind must reap the whirlwind. And, as we are also
 learning anew, God's retributions are not in vengeance, not merely
 wrathful. Like His mercies, they are full of a Divine purpose,

they come upon us to purge our vision, to break down the national pride and prejudices, to show us our follies and our sins. They have taught millions already, & some of them of the most hardened & unbelieving description, not merely that ~~they~~ it is difficult to circumvent God's laws, but impossible; not merely that it is expedient to do right, but that they must do it, and that speedily, if they would save the People & Country from utter destruction. The awful scenes & sacrifices of this War were necessary, every one; and even more of the same must come. But if, by all these judgments, we learn righteousness, that will be far better than to have amassed within our borders all the wealth of the Continent. The nation has grown, morally, & in a just self-knowledge, in these two years, more than ever before. You have already seen several evidences of this, and will see (I am confident) yet more. No Slaveholders' Rule is to be suffered in North America; and its end (I have good hope) is very near. But many of our English friends could see only the dark side, & the exceptional cases, in our condition; and so they have had little hope for us, & the cheering 'God speed' they had given us through so many dark years before, was now withheld - perchance even given to the side, where "the sum of all villainies" was making its last & superhuman efforts for mastery & complete control. I need not mention names to you, who have told us of the sad defection of some in Bristol. We had ^{learned} ~~known~~ of other cases equally painful.

How grand & splendid & holy, on the other hand, has been the sight of them in your land, - true to their early vows, or started into vigorous antislavery life by a clear perception of the damnable purposes of the Slaveholding leaders! How admirable was Prof. Newman's letter to Mr. Gladstone! It seemed to me the perfection of human wisdom, expressed in the best English I ever read. So too of Mr. Bright, of Newman Hall, of Baptist Noel, of Prof. Cairnes, of J. Stuart Mill, of Thomas Hughes, of Wm. E. Forster, of the Duke of Argyll, - and last, not least, of George Thompson; who, rising above every narrow, selfish, & petty consideration, have looked at America, and her fearful struggle, in the light of Justice, Humanity, and all the broadest principles which should govern human intercourse. A paragraph from a recent letter of Rev. Francis Bishop's appears in yesterday's Standard. It is magnanimous. If you ever communicate with him, I would be glad to be remembered to him, with my love and respect.

But I must say something about ourselves - my family, I mean, - for I am sure your friendly interest in us continues. Our youngest, Bessie, has grown to a very tall girl of her age (she was 13 last week) - she is taller than Ade., and is quite a knowing, intelligent child, & for the advantages she has had, has made very fair proficiency. We have not been able to give her all the school-opportunity we could wish, because of a nervous weakness of stammering which came upon the poor child at about 5 or 6 years old. But the privation has been very much made up to her by an excellent lady in our neighbourhood, who allows B. to come to her 4 hours every morning, and who has well grounded her in all the indispensable English branches, and has made her quite skilful in knitting & crocheting, and they read history together, having gone thro' 8 or 10 octavo vols. of our best historians, Prescott, Motley, Sparks, & Irving - also several such books as the Lives of Dr. Arnold, Dr. Follen, Schiller, Mrs. Ware, and occasionally some lighter literature. Then the child is remarkably good natured and of happy temperament, & her infirmity of speech never depresses her, - though it continually compels her to subside in company. Among my 4 children she is the only singer, - having a pleasant voice (& never stammering then), and playing the piano pretty well considering her limited advantages there. But I am not going to enlarge on all my family at the above rate. The next older (Jos. Russell) is 18 yrs. old, & has commenced a mercantile life. - Edward, now 25, on his return from India just before the war broke out, was moved to go into the service of the country, & so strongly moved that we could but say, Yea & Amen, and he went, and has acquired a good name as a faithful officer (he is a Paymaster in the Navy), and is now stationed on the Mississippi, in very good health. - Ade. remains at home, much to our satisfaction of course. We should be lonely and crippled enough, in all our home matters, without her, - & Bessie too. My wife is in better health than usual this winter & spring; she made a three weeks' visit to Canada in February, at a time of severe cold there, - enjoyed it very much, and was not annoyed by the cold, which is usually her great enemy. My own health may be somewhat improved, ~~perhaps~~ in comparison with one & two years ago. But even now it is quite uncertain. - We have been quite afflicted recently in the death of a young man, whose Guardian I have been since he was six yrs. old. At 18, he enlisted in the Army, and was a good, faithful, ^{brave} ~~valiant~~ young soldier. In Augt. last he recd. a shattering wound in the right foot at the battle of Cedar Mountain, Virginia. The surgeons tho't his foot might be saved - but they were mistaken. He was discharged from a U.S. Hospital in February & came home.

Amputation was unavoidable, and I brought him to Boston, to have the best surgical skill & attendance within reach. All went well, apparently, a week, when unfavourable symptoms, first of suppuration, then of bleeding appeared, and he sank away rapidly and died, - about 3 weeks since. & his two years' army life, he had become thoughtful & manly. He bore his wound, & its sufferings & inconveniences, very uncomplainingly, and met his death without fear or distrust. "I have a Mother waiting for me in heaven" he said to his attendant nurse. He was a lad of not many words, never made professions, was very free from cant, and would not have said that, had he not really felt it. — Parker Pillsbury has lately been very ill indeed, - not so much reduced as at Bristol perhaps, but nearly. He is just getting about, but will probably be obliged to remain very quiet, & abstain from all exertion, all summer. — There has been a movement, both on your side the water & ours, to induce "Wendell" Phillips to go to England for a month or two, and speak on the American question in all your principal towns. The Confederate agents have had, for two years & more, almost exclusive access (so far as Americans are concerned) to the ear of the British people, as well as the capitalists, ship-builders, &c.

In a parcel which we sent to care R.D. Webb. some 2 mos. ago, (and of the arrival of which I have but lately heard) I placed a photograph view of our Music Hall Stage as arranged for the 29th Subscription Anniversary. I hope it has reached you safely. It is not much to see, perhaps; but I thought (as the Music Hall is to be essentially altered, & the scene of the last 3 or 4 years can never be repeated - & perhaps we might never need to hold another A.S. Subscription Anniversary; but on that point I am not sanguine) I would like to have a memor. On the right of the centre, as you look at the picture, are the busts of (1st) Garrison & (2^d) Phillips. On the left, I think you will recognise the first one - the second is Brackett's bust of John Brown. The central picture is a capital likeness of John Brown, which we have lately purchased to be placed in some public collection. The other pictures are of Clarkson, O'Connell, Garrison, Theo. Parker, Presb. Geffrard of Hayti, &c. The banner in the rear represents the State Arms of Virginia, & her (self-condemning) motto "Sic Semper Tyrannis". - I wish we could have had the picture taken, when the platform was well filled with living men & women; but it was deemed impossible to do it, ^{well,} in the circumstances. A screen upon which the busts stand was about 20 or 25 feet in advance of the Virginia banner & Statue of Beethoven.

Leicester, April 28. - I am finishing my letter at home. It occurs to me that you will be pleased to see what our friend Miss Holley says of Miss Cobbe's "Reply", and I will enclose a note I recently had from her, though I have had to shear it of its fair proportions to its within weight. I have heard nothing definitely about your health for many months. I suppose you have to live very quietly & watchfully. Are you much alone? I hope Mrs. Armstrong is well. I should be glad to be kindly remembered to her. - Has all Bristol gone back to the Idols of Slavery? "Ohi! Jerusalem, Jerusalem I believe nowhere has G. Thompson had to fight harder to get a hearing than in Bristol

anti-Garrisonism would take pretty well. - I too am sorry for him; his present friends are not those ^{I suspect} who can morally support him, however they may be able to ~~be~~ do so pecuniarily. D. has spoken out well and honorably about Kossuth. - Upon that matter, by the way, I cannot now speak; you will have seen what conclusions our friends here have arrived at, as to his ^{his} truth to his professed principles. - Mr. Garrison is just getting through the Press a pamphlet showing up the character of the Govt. & People which Kossuth has been lavishly & extravagantly praising - as well as his own time-serving course. We shall send you some copies of this pamphlet. - We know, from your Note and many other sources, that he was faithfully warned & instructed as to what he would meet in America. ~~That~~ he is chosen & flattered (American) Apologist, while he was in England, was Robert J. Walker, a leader among the slave holders, a chief of owners & traffickers in human bodies & souls, a crafty Southern politician. My disappointment in him was very great, was entire; for I had hoped, even against all former experience, that he would be true.

[The latter part of this note I have written at the Anti-Slavery office, amidst much ~~noise~~ talk & interruption. Please excuse this, as well as the variety in the paper.]

Has Mr. Grant ever taken notice of Mr. Garrison's reply to him? Several copies of that paper have been sent to him. Mr. G. says he has seen no reply.

(or note)
I received a letter^(or note) from Wm. & Ellen Craft,
near the close of the year. It was signed "W. & E.
Craft", and I could not feel quite sure which
wrote it, but I thought it was Wm.'s handwriting.
It was a very neat, clean, distinct writing, and
every word in the Note was correctly spelled. It
gave me great pleasure to see it, as it did to re-
many others also. Shortly after getting it, I replied,
particularly noticing the death of one whom they
would, I am sure, affectionately remember, - Old
Dennett of Portland. His house was the one which
protected & sheltered them, while they remained for
or 3 nights at Portland, previous to ^{leaving the U.S.} ~~embarking~~ for the
Br. Provinces, on their way to England. The non-depart
of the boat from Portland, as advertised, (on acc^t. of an injury
compelled them to remain in P. several days, when they had
not expected to remain one hour. In this ~~unlooked~~ ^{unlooked} for
difficulty, I took them to the house of the above-named
gentleman; who, with his wife, gave us a most cordial
heartly welcome, & for the time we were there, showed us
no little kindness. - Mr. D.'s death was quite unlooked for.
W. & E. will, I trust, remain at Oakham, till they have
fully acquired the education they need. Your friendship
for them (of which they most gratefully speak) would
entitle you to the lasting thanks of all anti-slavery
folks here, if you had done no more to testify your
interest in & for the enslaved.

And here - as time compels - with many assurances
of our regard & respect, for yourself & Miss Estlin,
I am, Yours, Sam^l. May, Jr.